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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

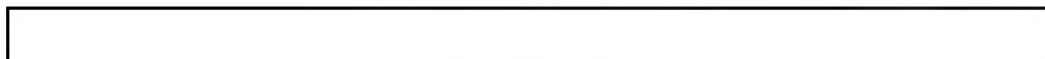
*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
2 January 1966

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HIGHLIGHTS

Hanoi, Moscow, and Peking in public statements over the weekend discounted the current US peace offensive. Soviet party secretary Shelepin is expected to leave for Hanoi on January 6 or 7.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
The serious flare-up of fighting in Quang Ngai Province on 29-30 December which resulted in the government's abandoning the district town of Minh Long and the overrunning of a government post, has subsided (Paras. 1-2). Twenty-three B-52 Stratofortresses struck a suspected assembly area for a Viet Cong regiment in Tay Ninh Province (Para. 3). South Vietnamese and South Korean troops are conducting a joint operation in Phu Yen Province which although reported stalled has so far accounted for 121 Viet Cong killed (Para. 4). South Vietnamese, American, and Australian units--a total of seven battalions--are conducting a search and destroy operation close to the Cambodian border in the southwestern corner of Hau Nghia Province (Para. 5). In the delta region, the Viet Cong attacked an outpost 40 miles southwest of Saigon, and a Regional Force company in Vinh Binh Province (Para. 6). Several American personnel and South Vietnamese civilians were injured in an explosion in Nha Trang city, while two Vietnamese children were killed and four wounded while playing with a dud mine in Binh Duong Province (Paras. 7-8).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:  
A Polish member of the International Control Commission turned himself over to Saigon police on 31 December and asked for political asylum (Para. 1).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:  
A US reconnaissance drone was shot down, apparently by North Vietnamese MIGs, on 1 January about 30 miles northeast of Hanoi (Para. 1).

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Another SAM site--the 62nd--has been detected (Para. 4). The Hanoi - Lao Cai rail line is now repaired and serviceable, according to photography

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:  
There is nothing of significance to report.

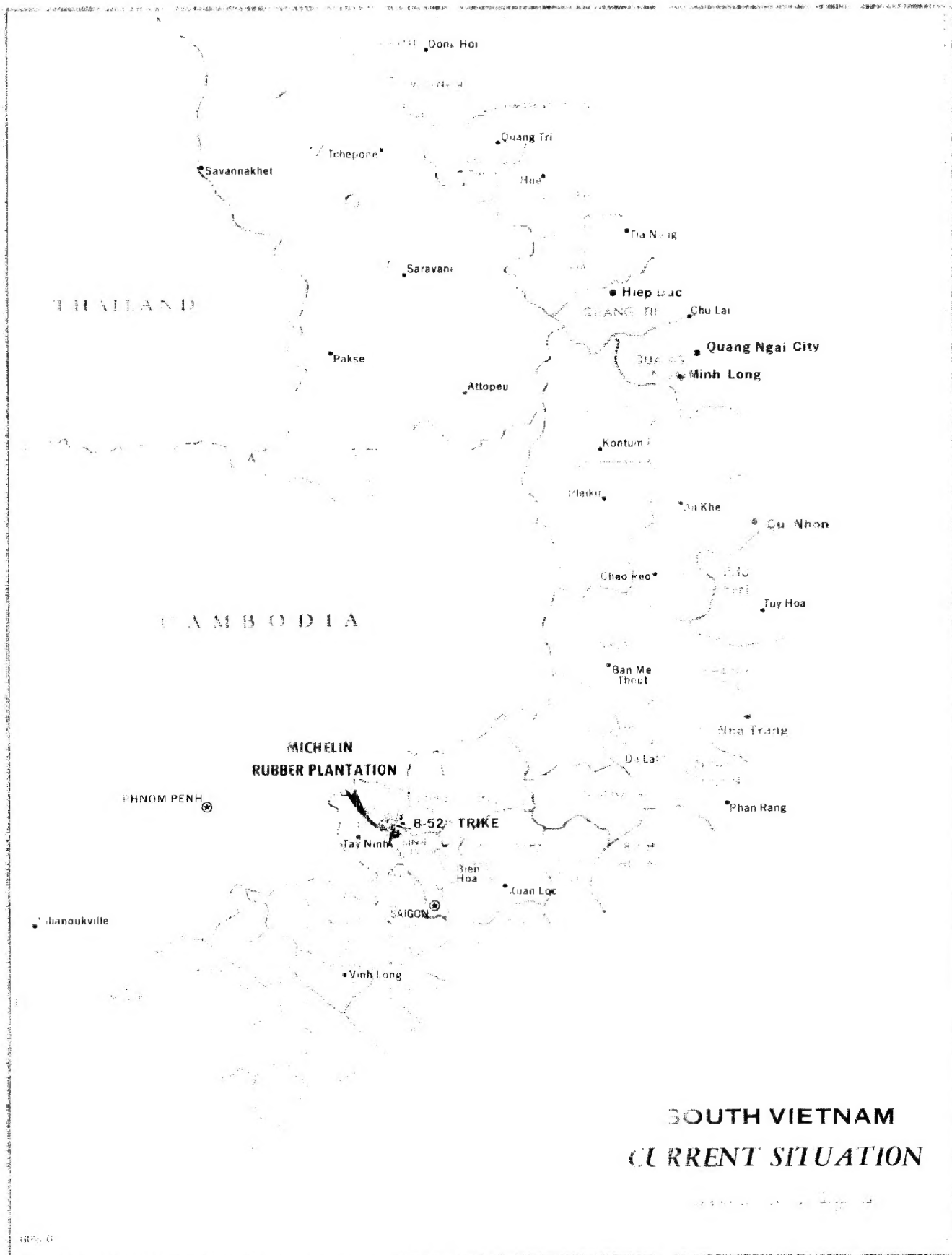
V. Communist Political Developments: Hanoi, Moscow, and Peking over the weekend discounted the current US peace offensive (Paras. 1-2). More restatements of Hanoi's basic position (Paras. 3-5). Peking claims that the DRV has "scuttled" the current US "peace intrigue" (Para. 6). Peking charges US is "plotting to impose war" upon the Chinese people (Para. 7). Pravda refers to the US peace offensive as a "propagandistic diversionary maneuver" (Para. 8). Soviet party secretary Shelepin is expected to leave for Hanoi on 6 or 7 January (Para. 9).

VI. Other Major Aspects:

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In-formation on US air strikes in North Vietnam in 1965 (Para. 3).

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# I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Fighting which raged near the Minh Long district town and two nearby outposts approximately 25 miles southwest of Quang Ngai city on 29-30 December subsided on 31 December. Although at least one outpost located about two miles north of Minh Long, was overrun, it has subsequently been reoccupied by government troops, apparently without opposition by the Viet Cong. As of the present time there are no official reports of casualties suffered by friendly forces, although one unconfirmed press account indicates that the government may have lost as many as 200 men.

2. The district town of Minh Long which was lost to the Communists will not be retaken in the immediate future, according to the commander of the ARVN 2d Division. In a press interview he indicated that the administrative functions will be moved to another town farther to the north. Minh Long is the second district town abandoned to the Communists in the operational area of the ARVN 2d Division in the last several weeks. The earlier loss was the town of Hiep Duc, in Quang Tin Province.

3. Twenty-three B-52 Stratofortresses struck a target area approximately 40 miles northwest of Saigon on 1 January. The target area, located in the Tay Ninh - Binh Duong border area, was a suspected assembly area for the 271st Viet Cong Regiment. It was believed that this regiment was preparing to attack either a nearby Special Forces camp or the ARVN 8th Regiment, currently situated in the Michelin plantation in northern Binh Duong Province. The 271st Regiment, in late November, virtually decimated the 7th ARVN Regiment then located in the Michelin plantation.

4. On 31 December, a joint operation involving a South Vietnamese airborne battalion and the 1st Marine Brigade of the Korean Capital

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Division was initiated in Phu Yen Province, approximately 60 miles south of the city of Qui Nhon. Heavy opposition from an estimated two Viet Cong battalions has caused the attack to be temporarily stalled. A two-pronged coordinated attack was scheduled, but it developed trouble. The Korean marines ran into very heavy fire and were stopped early, while the Vietnamese unit failed to jump off in their attack at the scheduled time. Losses to friendly forces so far are given as 15 killed (four Koreans) and 44 wounded (27 Koreans and one US). Additional losses include four Koreans listed as missing and one helicopter downed by enemy fire. Viet Cong losses are 121 killed (US/Korean/Vietnamese body count), eight captured, and 42 suspects taken. The operation is continuing.

5. In the southwest quadrant of Hau Nghia Province, approximately 25 miles west-southwest of Saigon, a combined South Vietnamese, United States, and Australian search and destroy operation has been in progress since 31 December. The operation commenced with the air movement of four ARVN battalions, on 31 December, into an area very close to the South Vietnam - Cambodian border which made initial contact with an estimated two companies of Viet Cong.

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On 1 January, two battalions of the US 173d Airborne Brigade and the Australian infantry battalion were helilifted into positions to the west of the ARVN units and commenced operations. At last report, on 2 January, the US forces were still engaged with a well-entrenched Communist force of undetermined size. The movement of US and Australian forces into the southwestern portion of Hau Nghia Province marks the first time that foreign troops have been used in the Mekong Delta area against the Viet Cong. Cumulative results of this operation so far show 123 Viet Cong killed (US body count), 63 captured, and 248 suspects detained. Friendly losses are given as eight US

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killed and 11 wounded, and 31 South Vietnamese killed and 97 wounded.

6. Elsewhere in South Vietnam, a Viet Cong force attacked a government outpost approximately 40 miles southwest of Saigon, killing eight of the defenders and wounding 11. Three others were listed as missing. Five Viet Cong were killed in this attack. Also in the delta region, on 31 December, in Vinh Binh Province, a South Vietnamese Regional Force company was attacked by a Viet Cong unit of unknown size. Friendly losses were 10 killed, 15 wounded, and 16 missing. A reaction force sent into the area has so far failed to make contact with the attacking force.

7. On 1 January in Nha Trang an unidentified explosive device, presumably the work of Viet Cong terrorists, detonated on the roof of a US recreational club. Five US personnel and four Vietnamese were wounded in the explosion, none seriously.

8. Two children were killed and four others were wounded on 1 January while playing with a dud mine. The incident occurred about eight miles northwest of Saigon, in Binh Duong Province.

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. On 31 December a Polish member of the International Control Commission surrendered himself to a local police station in Saigon and asked for political asylum. The Polish national, identified by the police [REDACTED] was an interpreter with the ICC. He has subsequently been turned over to the Vietnamese Military Security Service for further questioning.

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### III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. A US reconnaissance drone was shot down apparently by North Vietnamese MIGs on 1 January about 30 miles northeast of Hanoi. The MIGs reportedly staged out of Kep Airfield. This was the tenth US drone lost over North Vietnam. There are no indications at present of what type of weapons the MIGs used.

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4. Another SAM site--the 62nd--was discovered by NPIC in [ ] photography. Located approximately 20 miles northeast of Hanoi, the site has six revetted launch positions. No missile equipment was noted. A study of all of the North Vietnamese SAM sites is presently under way at NPIC to determine the quality of construction and, if possible those that appear to be permanent installations.

5. The Hanoi - Lao Cai rail line is now repaired and serviceable, according to photography [ ] A restoration of all bridges and bypassing of stranded or derelict stock was noted. This line is a major link in North Vietnam's domestic transport system and part of China's only rail connection between Kunming and East China.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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## V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Hanoi, Moscow and Peking in public statements over the weekend discounted the current US peace offensive. The DRV party daily, Nhan Dan, on 31 December criticized the US peace effort as only a cover-up for another escalation of the war. Nhan Dan charged that US leaders "have not shown the least sign of desire" for a peaceful settlement and that current actions were for the purpose of "preparing public opinion" for the dispatch of additional US divisions to South Vietnam.

2. Hanoi continues to assail US overflights of DRV territory, and on 1 January charged that US planes were engaged in "spying and provocative" activities. Hanoi has charged that continued flights are "preparation for more criminal activities."

3. Hanoi on 30 December broadcast a tough restatement of its basic position. A Voice of Vietnam commentary derided various US proposals to bring about talks, including US expressions of willingness for unconditional negotiations and the possibility of a cease-fire. The commentary implied that no movement in the Vietnam situation is possible until the US proves by "actual deeds" its willingness to withdraw its forces from South Vietnam. In fact, the commentator says that the only way to "end the state of war" is for the US to withdraw its troops and leave the settlement in Vietnamese hands.

4. In a New Year's message to the American people, North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh reiterated Hanoi's basic stand on a settlement in Vietnam and again charged that US leaders "speak of peace, but actually step up war."

5. North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong, in an interview broadcast on 31 December, claimed

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that the only obstacle to a "correct peaceful solution" in Vietnam was the "aggressive policy" of the United States. Pham claimed that the Vietnamese people were determined to defeat the US "war of aggression" in Vietnam. "Only then," he claimed, "can the way be paved for a peaceful settlement."

6. The Chinese, in a People's Daily editorial of 1 January, praised Hanoi statements of 30-31 December, claiming that the DRV had "pointedly scuttled" the current US "peace intrigue." People's Daily claimed that the US aim in advocating "unconditional discussions" was to force the Vietnamese people to surrender unconditionally and to accept the "permanent stay" of US troops in Vietnam.

7. In a New Year's editorial in People's Daily, the Chinese again charged that the US is "plotting to impose war" upon the Chinese people. The editorial charged that the US "unintentionally carries out provocations against China and intends to challenge China" and warned that "if the US aggressors dare to invade, we will wipe them out." This is a restatement of the standard Chinese line which implies that Peking will not provoke a war with the US but would respond to a US attack.

8. In a 1 January commentary, Pravda referred to the US peace offensive as a "propagandistic diversionary maneuver." On 2 January, a Pravda editorial charged that, having intensified bombing of the DRV and widened the intervention in South Vietnam, the US is now preparing to carry hostilities into Laos and Cambodia. The Soviets have not referred directly to the bombing pause but, in the same Pravda commentary, stated that the US was carrying out "reconnaissance" flights over the DRV and continuing air attacks in South Vietnam.

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9. Soviet party secretary Shelepin is expected to leave for Hanoi on 6 or 7 January, according to a Soviet Foreign Ministry official. A Soviet official had earlier indicated that Shelepin would arrive in Hanoi this past weekend. It may be that the departure of the Soviet delegation has been delayed to give Moscow time to study the implications of recent US diplomatic moves. There has been no editorial comment on the visit from Moscow, Peking, or Hanoi. Albania has assailed the visit as an attempt by the USSR to convince DRV leaders that the North Vietnamese party should attend a world Communist meeting.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

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3. Close to 20,000 strike sorties were flown by US aircraft over North Vietnam during 1965. Nearly 190 US aircraft were lost. Surface-to-air missiles accounted for eleven of the planes downed. More than 75,000 tons of ordnance were dropped on North Vietnam. A chronology of some of the highlights of the year is given below.

US initiates regular air strikes on Vietnam

....7 February

First US losses to MIGs: Two USAF F-105 Thunderchiefs downed by MIGs at Thanh Hoa bridge

....4 April

First SAM site detected under construction in the Hanoi area

....5 April

First MIGs downed by US aircraft: USN Phantom jets down two MIGs with air-to-air missiles

....17 June

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First US loss to SAMs: Soviet-launched SAM  
downs one Phantom jet, damages three .....24 July

Vietnamese control of SAM operations  
first noted .....5 September

US Navy jets destroy first mobile SAM  
unit .....17 October

MIG-21s confirmed in North Vietnam .....12 December

Uong Bi thermal power plant knocked  
out .....22 December

Christmas truce .....24 December

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